



## INTRODUCTION TO OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

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*Airpower has become predominant, both as a deterrent to war, and—in the eventuality of war—as the devastating force to destroy an enemy’s potential and fatally undermine his will to wage war.*

— General Omar Bradley

Air Force Doctrine Annex 3-0 is the Air Force’s foundational doctrine publication on [strategy](#) and [operational design](#), planning, employment, and [assessment](#) of [airpower](#). It presents the Air Force’s most extensive explanation of the [effects-based approach to operations](#) (EBAO) and contains the Air Force’s doctrinal discussion of operational design and some practical considerations for designing operations to coerce or influence adversaries. It presents doctrine on [cross-domain integration](#) and [steady-state operations](#)—emerging, but validated concepts that are integral to and fully complement EBAO. It establishes the framework for Air Force [components](#) to function and fight as part of a larger [joint](#) and [multinational](#) team. Specific guidance on particular types of Air Force operations can be found in other operational-level doctrine as well as [Air Force tactics, techniques, and procedures](#) documents. This publication conveys basic understanding of key design and planning processes and how they are interrelated. It also educates [Airmen](#) in ways of thinking through these processes.

The US’ national security and national military strategies establish the ends, goals, and conditions the armed forces are tasked to attain in concert with non-military instruments of national power. [Joint force commanders](#) (JFCs), in turn, employ strategy to determine and assign military objectives, and associated tasks and effects, to obtain the ends, goals, and conditions stipulated by higher guidance in an effort to produce enduring advantage for the US, its allies, and its interests. Strategy is a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and multinational objectives. Airmen should follow a disciplined, repeatable approach to strategy development in order to maximize airpower’s contribution to overarching national aims.

This annex presents the following topics:

- ✦ An introduction to strategy and some time-tested insights that guide its

implementation.

- ★ A discussion on how airpower is used across the [range of military operations](#) (ROMO).
- ★ An introduction to common processes used to design, plan, execute, and assess Air Force participation in all types of operations.
- ★ A discussion of elements to consider when attempting to coerce or influence adversaries, to help guide design and higher-level planning in practical terms.
- ★ An introduction to the processes and framework common to planning for both steady-state and crisis/contingency conditions.
- ★ An introduction to processes and considerations specific to operations during ongoing, steady-state conditions, such as normally apply in peacetime.
- ★ An introduction to processes and considerations specific to operations during crises and contingencies, such as apply in wartime and other major operations and campaigns.

Today, the United States faces many security challenges including an ongoing conflict against implacable extremists, engagement with regimes that support terrorism, and the need to support international partners. Against this backdrop, US military forces may be called upon to conduct a full range of operations in a variety of conflicts and security situations, including [major operations and campaigns](#), [irregular warfare](#), [information operation](#), [homeland defense](#), [humanitarian assistance/disaster relief](#) efforts, building partnerships with other nations, and others.

The operational environments in which airpower is employed may be characterized by simultaneous action by Air Force forces against more than one adversary at a time—including the potential for near-peer and peer competitors—who may attempt to achieve [objectives](#) against US interests by using [asymmetric](#) advantages across all [instruments of power](#): diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. Conflicts may occur with little or no warning and they may stretch the Air Force as it works with JFCs to provide support for the joint force while simultaneously addressing Air Force-unique missions.

Airpower commanders and strategists should not only design and plan strategy, they should *think strategically*—focusing beyond the designated end states of operations that may be ongoing at a particular time. This requires Airmen to contribute to formulating and carrying out strategy in peacetime and, when possible, to anticipate conflicts and other operations as contingencies of ongoing, steady-state strategies. It also suggests that Airmen need to adapt flexibly, since not all contingencies and adversary actions can be anticipated.

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